

Founder of British Carriage Dog Society becomes first accredited instructor for the sport

THE FIRST person in the UK to achieve a Kennel Club teaching qualification for her work with carriage dogs has been named.

Alison Burgess of Heathfield, East Sussex, who trains Dalmatians to run with horses and carriages, has become an accredited instructor in carriage dogs after completing the qualification offered by the KC Accreditation Scheme for Instructors in Dog Training and Canine Behaviour (KCAI).

With a City & Guilds Accreditation, the KCAI is the UK's largest body of instructors and is helping to raise standards and set benchmarks for the animal training industry.

After getting her first Dalmatian in 1999, Alison travelled to the US to see a carriage dog trial and, with a group of fellow enthusiasts, decided to arrange the UK's first trials in 2003. Alison is also the founder of the British Carriage Dog Society, which she set up in 2006.

Historic past

"Dogs have always been a big part of my life and at the age of 15 I fell in love with the Dalmatian," she said. "They were trained to run along with horse and carriages and were popular in the 17th and 18th century, when they became known as carriage dogs. Their job was to guard the carriage from footpads and highway men.

"I became fascinated by the breed and their wonderful past."

The new accreditation was created



Alison Burgess with her piebald and Dalmatian.

photo Swingtree Photography

by the KC to raise standards and set a benchmark for those who specialise in training carriage dogs – as well as to give members of the public interested in carriage dog training clear guidance about qualified and experienced trainers in this field.

"Knowledge is incredibly important in the training of carriage dogs and I'm thrilled that we are able to produce carriage dogs trainers of the highest calibre through the KCAI scheme," Alison said.

"I've learnt a lot while working my way through the scheme and it's been very helpful to look at the wider world of dog training. It's

fantastic that carriage dog trainers are now able to become Accredited Instructors.

"I hope trainers take advantage of all the scheme has to offer to give Dalmatian owners the assurance of the quality of training they'll receive."

KC spokesman Caroline Kisko said: "It's fantastic that Alison is working so hard to preserve the heritage of the Dalmatian as a carriage dog.

"We congratulate her in her success and look forward to more carriage dogs trainers becoming accredited in the future."

Send your letters to:

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